

Calendon Kidnapping Case

Astro the Seer Versus a Gang of Archplotters

By ALAN BRAGHAMPTON

Drawings by Karl Anderson



IT WAS at the end of a busy day when Valeska Wynne, the pretty assistant to Astro the Seer, threw back the black velvet portières of the great studio, and motioned her visitors to enter. They came in anxiously, a dignified but careworn, haggard man of fifty and his hysterical, sobbing wife. Apparently they expected immediately to meet the Master of Mysteries face to face; for they looked curiously about the richly decorated apartment with a hesitating air.

"You'll have to wait a few moments," said the girl in a friendly voice. "The Master is at present rapt in a psychic trance, and cannot be disturbed. Excuse me while I prepare for his awakening. It is dangerous to call him too suddenly; but I know your business is urgent, and I'll do what I can."

With that, she took from a small antique reliquary a handful of green powder and scattered it on a censer. Almost immediately it flared up and sent forth an aromatic smoke. It flickered eerily as she left them. Once alone, she entered a small chamber off the reception room, and turned on the studio lights from an electric switch.

In the place where she stood now, looking into a large mirror, she could see the visitors, vividly illuminated, as if in a camera obscura. The man sat listlessly, staring straight ahead of him without movement of any kind. The woman gazed, with raised eyebrows and a half-startled expression, from one curious object to another. The skull in a corner made her tremble. Her fingers plucked nervously at her wrap. It was evident that she was fearfully distraught.

Astro entered the cabinet and cast his eyes on the glass. His assistant leaned close to him and whispered:

"A kidnapping case. The Calendons' little boy was stolen a week or so ago, don't you remember? It's really dreadful. The police have been unable to locate the boy anywhere, and they're half crazy about it. She poured it all out to me while they were waiting for you. I do hope you can do something!"

The seer's eyes were busy in the mirror. "Yes, I know. He's a director in the Tobacco Trust. I'd have known it, anyway, by that little silver cigar on his watch chain. A dozen of them were made for souvenirs when the combine was first organized. He hasn't slept for two or three nights. But what's he doing with 'The Era'? He'd naturally be a reader of 'The Planet.' Oh, I see! The kidnapers of course have asked him to communicate with them through the 'Personal' column. So they've begun to work him already. Poor devil!"

IT was an agonizing story that fell from the lips of Calendon a little later; one which, in all the sensational events of the seer's career in the solution of mysteries, long stood out as unique. Used as was Astro to astonishing recitals, there was a ferocity about this crime that astounded him. Calendon recited the details in a voice as hard and strained as a taut wire.

"My five-year-old boy Harold has been missing for ten days, having been kidnapped and kept in hiding by the most merciless gang of fiends in New York. I try to restrain myself, sir, in order to tell you the story concisely; but I assure you it is hard to speak calmly. My child was abducted in Central Park, where he had gone with his nurse. He had strayed a little away from her at the time. I cannot think the crime was committed with her connivance. Nevertheless, she has been closely watched. I have not spared money, I assure you. I at once notified the police, and they have been at work on the case, without results, so far." He paused for a moment, almost overcome.

His wife interrupted him with a cry of anguish pitiful to hear. "Oh, James! how can you sit there and tell all that? Why don't you tell him immediately what has happened to-day? Why don't you show him the terrible thing?" She dropped her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

Calendon put a trembling hand into his pocket and drew out a package wrapped in paper. Silently he handed it to the palmist. Astro took it and carefully undid the wrapping.

Inside was disclosed a small tin box, such as tobacco of the sliced plug variety usually comes in. This, opened, showed an object in crumpled oiled paper, packed in the box with cotton wool. Astro, with a grave expression on his swarthy face, picked the thing up and looked carefully at it. With great

caution, then, he slowly unfolded the paper. It was a child's toe.

For a few minutes not a sound was heard in the studio, save Mrs. Calendon's choking sobs, and the intake of her husband's deep breaths as he endeavored to master his emotion. Astro put aside the gruesome object with its wrappings, and then extended his hand and grasped Calendon's with a strong, encouraging pressure.

"Mr. Calendon," he said, simply, "I am at your service. I thank God that I have had some success in tracking down worse crimes than this, and what I can do in this matter shall be done without reward. Cheer up, Mr. Calendon; I can help you! Madam, pray accept my sympathy; but master yourself, for I must hear the whole story."

CALENDON moistened his lips, pulled himself together, and looked gratefully at the slender, poetic figure before him. "I'll tell you the rest of the story now, and I pray to God that you can help!" He turned to his wife, and after she was calmer he proceeded.

"It's devilishly ingenious, sir. What they are holding the boy for is in order to get tips on the market. That's their price. I got from them the third day a typewritten, unsigned letter telling me that if I valued the life of my boy, I should give them inside information of the stock market. They furnished me with a cipher, — an easy one that simply reads backward, and by means of it I communicate with them every morning in the personal column of 'The Era.' I am not a stock gambler, sir, although I have a fair knowledge of current Wall Street probabilities, and I soon exhausted what information I had, and it became harder and harder to deliver the goods. You know how these things go: a big deal isn't pulled off every day, and, not being on the inside, I had to get down on my knees to get news from the men on the Street who were able to help me. A few have interested themselves in my misfortune and assisted me; but they're a cold blooded set as a rule. But for a week I kept these bloodsuckers posted as well as I could, and I had good luck with my predictions. They must have made thousands; but still they wouldn't give up the boy. Why should they? They have a good thing, and intend to work it for all it's worth."

"But yesterday—great God!—yesterday I advertised in good faith to buy Continental Zinc. It was selling at 31, and I had figured on a big dividend being declared,—so my advice had it,—but instead the directors voted to pass it, and the stock fell six points. It rallied later, on the mine reports; but the rise came too late."

He stopped to draw a typewritten slip from his pocket. "Here's what came in the box," he said brokenly, and hid his face in his hands. Mrs. Calendon began weeping afresh.

Astro took the note and read it:

This is what we'll do every time you fool us. Be sharp!

For sometime Astro gazed at the sheet of paper, then rose and put it away with the other relics. "Have you the other letter here?"

Calendon took an envelop from his inside pocket and handed it to the palmist.

Astro held the envelop to the light, smelt of it, looked at the flap for a minute with his lens, then placed it on a side table. At last he rose and walked quietly over to a cupboard, from which he took a large crystal ball. This he placed on a black velvet cushion. He gazed into the sphere long and earnestly.

The seer finally drew his long slim hand across his forehead and nodded his head. "There is no one you suspect? No woman?" he asked deliberately.

Calendon shook his head in silence.

"My nurse girl has been completely prostrated



Valeska Prepared to Awaken the Master from His Psychic Trance.

by the shock," Mrs. Calendon volunteered. "We are both sure she is innocent."

"There is a woman concerned in this, nevertheless. Now tell me what the police have done. They have tried to trace the buyers of the stocks you tipped off, I presume?"

"Certainly. We have tried to find what persons, if any, have profited by all the tips; but have been unsuccessful. I shall have a list, to-night probably, of all the buyers of Continental Zinc, eliminating, of course, the names of those who have bought for investment. The criminals are undoubtedly speculating; so there's little use looking up the records of the transfer office."

"You have your tip for to-morrow all ready for the newspaper?"

"Yes, and this time I'm sure it's safe."

"Very well, then, proceed as usual. You have, I suppose, your own detectives working on the case?"

"Yes. Can they do anything for you?"

"I'll telephone you early in the morning," said Astro, rising. "To-night I shall be busy. I shall cast the child's horoscope, and find out the best path to pursue. Kindly give me the exact hour of Harold's birth."

He wrote it down solemnly, then pressed an electric bell. Valeska appeared in the doorway; the visitors followed her into the waiting room to the outer door.

Before she left, Mrs. Calendon took the girl's hand. "Oh, he's a wonderful man!" she exclaimed. "Somehow I have a great faith in him. I'm strengthened already. He seems to know everything. Such eyes!"

Her husband shook his head skeptically, and went out without a word.

ASTRO meanwhile had turned eagerly to the things that had been brought him, the lines of his olive face set and determined. From the inspired mystic to the man of practical analytic mind, the transition had been instantaneous. All pose was now dropped. His inspection was so absorbing that he did not notice Valeska's entrance. She did not speak, therefore, and watched him as he pored over the envelop, then at the oiled paper wrapping of the horrid relic. Half an hour went by, during which the palmist rose several times to pace up and down the length of the dim studio. Once he took down a book from his shelves and ran hurriedly through its pages, stopping to mark a dia-

gram. Valeska tiptoed across, and looked at the volume. It was Galton's "Finger Prints," a classification of all the known capillary markings of the digital tips. It was an hour before Astro put up his work, much of which time had been spent merely in sitting with half closed eyes, inert. Then he rose and yawned.

"Well, little girl, a bit of supper wouldn't go bad, would it?" he said gaily. "Afterward, you may sit at my feet, and I shall tell you of my desire to meet a lady that takes snuff, whose left thumb shows an invaded loop with two eyeleted rods; also, of my interest in a gentleman that rolls his own smokes on a 'Moule à Cigarettes' and gambles in Continental Zinc."

Valeska shook her head, puzzled.

"You heard what Calendon said, of course?"

"Yes, I was in the cabinet all the time. But of course I haven't studied your evidence yet."

"Nor shall you this night, by *Rameses*! A crystal gazer has to make his living on the curiosity of women. Kindly let me enjoy your curiosity this evening; and, that you may not be a loser, I shall explain to you the fallacies in Dr. Lasker's analysis of the Ruy Lopez opening. Meanwhile, let us try some of that new Assyrian jelly which I sent for so long ago. If you wish to add anything more substantial, I won't object, although I am a vegetarian, a Mahatma, an astrologer, cabalist, a student of Higher Space, and a thorough believer in the doctrine that an ounce of mystery is worth a pound of commonplace. *Selah*. I have spoken."

During the meal, no one would have supposed, by his animation, that the occult seer was confronted by the most difficult problem his profession had ever set for him. He joked like a young boy. His pretty assistant was kept in rippling peals of laughter. After dinner he produced a chessboard with ivory men, and the girl puzzled with him over innumerable variations of his favorite opening. They followed this by some of the regular chess problems, ending with several of his own. The last, finally, being too difficult, he left unfinished, sent Valeska home in his hansom, and himself went to bed.

THE next morning Astro looked, the first thing, at "The Era" personals. Calendon's advertisement read as follows:

ERUS: '97 Otag Lliwciwt celen atil opom S.O.C.

"I think," he said thoughtfully, "that it will hardly be dishonorable for me to plunge in *Cosmopolitan Electric*, as long as I'm not going to let Mr. Calendon pay me for this affair. Let's see. Sold yesterday at 75. If I can get it at five points margin, an investment of one thousand dollars will bring me in about eight hundred. I'll be able to get that Egyptian manuscript I have been wanting so long. Now for Mr. Calendon!"

He took his telephone, and was soon in communication with his client. "What have you found out?" he asked.

"Twelve persons bought Continental Zinc," was the answer. "Of these seven were legitimate investors. I have the names of the other five."

"Very good. Send your chief of detectives up to me in a hurry. There are some investigations they can make while I'm at work on a more important aspect of the case."

"Have you found out anything?" came the anxious inquiry.

"I am on the track. Have courage, and follow instructions. Tell Mrs. Calendon that she will not be disappointed in my work."

After his routine work that day, Valeska came into the studio, unable any longer to control her curiosity.

Astro drew out the evidence in the case and spread it before her. "All life is made up of little actions," he began. "Everyone of them leaves its little trace. Whether you are tracking a bear by its footprints through the forest, or a criminal through his nefarious deeds, it is the same thing. Both leave their spoor behind. Now examine this letter and envelop carefully."

Valeska took the magnifying glass and scrutinized both; but was forced to acknowledge her defeat.

Astro took the envelop from her and tilted it to the light. "Do you see a slight mark there?" he asked. "It is the print of a thumb. It is not generally known that a finger pressed on paper will leave an oily impression, especially when the hand has recently been passed through the hair. So it will on glass or any polished surface. Let us develop this print. The ink will cling to the paper except where these oily lines have been in contact with it. An ordinary thumbprint would

show the lines of the ridges; this will show those of the channels between the ridges."

Dipping a large brush in ink, he swept it over the paper. The ink flowed away from a patch where a little system of concentric lines appeared.

"Lo! the Invaded Loop!" he announced. "It is a woman's thumb. I saw it yesterday, and copied its fundamental diagram and its core. Now look at the mucilage on the flap. Do you see those tiny grains? Snuff, as I proved by my microscope. The postage stamp is awry, and half off, and also shows tiny traces of snuff. The woman was in a hurry. The corners of her mouth were stained with the result of her filthy practice. Now for the paper surrounding the toe. Let me smooth it out. Do you see the foldings and indentations that were there before it was used for this purpose? The marks are unmistakable, and by their geometric extension, to anyone who has studied stereotomy and the development of surfaces, it shows unmistakably what that object was. See, parallel lines, a twisted rumpled area, and here the traces of the milling of a small wheel. A small cigarette machine, such as one buys on the Rue de la Paix, in Paris. This is a long shot, to be sure; but sometimes it is the long shot that brings down the eagle. If I hit the mark this time, I'll never be afraid of making a risky guess again. We shall see."

HE was interrupted by the bell. Valeska left him, to introduce a neat and dapper young man, who entered, with a self satisfied smile, with the report from the detective offices of Nally & Co.

Of the five purchasers of Continental Zinc, most had bought from the curb market, and had been traced with some difficulty. A man had been assigned to each buyer, and these had followed the instructions given Nally that morning.

Abraham Fraser, retired Jewish merchant; the purchaser of twenty shares; smoked thick, black cigars.

H. V. Linwood, a young clubman and society favorite; insisted on a special brand of Russian cigarettes, costing four dollars a hundred.

William Bartlett Smith, a Westerner staying at the Waldorf Astoria; smoked a French briar pipe with granulated tobacco.

Lambert F. Owens, a race track bookie, living in South Orange, New Jersey; could not be traced; but information in regard to him was momentarily expected.

"The fifth man, Paul Stacey, I saw myself," said the detective. "I acted as a newspaper re-

porter. He's fairly well known on the Street; but yet I could find out little about him. Nobody knew much; but what they did let out was not very favorable. But I talked to him, and he smokes incessantly. Rolls his own cigarettes with a little nickel plated machine. Keeps Turkish tobacco loose in his right hand coat pocket, the instrument in his left. While I was near him he threw away a stub, and I brought it to show you. Here it is."

"Very good," said Astro, squinting at the cigarette butt. "You needn't bother about Owens. Now I want you to shadow this man Stacey wherever he goes. Use as many men for relays as you think necessary; but don't let him give you the slip as

you value your reputation. You understand the importance of this, and how fast we must work if the boy is to be saved."

As the young man left, Astro picked up the evening paper and turned to the reports of the stock market. His eyes ran down the column of figures swiftly, until he came to the line:

2000 Cosmopolitan Electric..... 75 70 72 73

"*Rameses the Great*!" he ejaculated. "That will teach me a lesson not to take advantage of my inside information. My margin's wiped out already. Pity I didn't stay with my good intentions! And I an Astrologer of the Fourth Circle! I hope nobody will find that out. Valeska, whatever you do, don't gamble." For a moment he stood contemplating the sheet before him, and then he turned to her with a strange expression.

"Mercy!" he cried. "I forgot. Calendon's tip has gone wrong again! What will happen next? It's horrible!"

HE was interrupted by a long ring at the electric bell, and, when Valeska answered it, Calendon plunged into the room, holding a package in one hand. The muscles of his hand were twitching in a frenzy of agony.

"It's come again, oh God!" he cried. "My poor boy! What in Heaven's name can we do?" He went up to the palmist fiercely. "See here! you promised me your help! You even gave me encouragement! See what has happened already! How long must this thing go on?"

"Have you opened the package?" Astro asked quietly.

Calendon shuddered. "No. I couldn't!"

"Leave it with me, then. You must wait, Mr. Calendon. I am hard at work. I am certain to succeed. Already I have the man; but it is necessary to prove it. One can't use a crystal vision as evidence in a court of law, you know."

"Who is the scoundrel?" Calendon demanded. "By Heaven! I'll tear him limb from limb! I'll kill him! I'll—"

Astro put a restraining hand on the director's arm. "Calm yourself, Mr. Calendon," he said soothingly. "It is not by such means that we'll get the boy. In your present frame of mind I dare not trust you with the man's name. If you make a move now, you may even jeopardize your boy's life. He must on no account know that he is suspected. No, play the game, Mr. Calendon, according to the rules the kidnappers have prescribed, and I'll guarantee that soon they'll be playing it according to your own ideas of justice. Get your tip and advertise as usual. You will no doubt have better luck to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Calendon sadly, "I'm going to throw all my holdings in the Fountaintet Company into the market and bear the stock long enough for these devils to get their shameful profits. I can't bear to receive another package. It will mean ruin for me; but I'll not care if the boy is safe."

IT was fortunate for Astro that at that time he was also interested in the astonishing burglaries at Glebe House; for it filled in a tedious forty-eight hours of waiting with considerable excitement. Valeska could see that the Master was profoundly interested in the tragic fate of the young boy, and that it had enlisted all his deepest sympathies. What little leisure they had was occupied with a set of chess problems which Astro was working out for relaxation.

It was a great relief, therefore, when the young detective from Nally's put in his appearance two days later, and made his report.

"We've been hot on Stacey's trail ever since I left you; but with nothing doing of any importance whatever until late yesterday afternoon. Then he took a train to Antwerp, New Jersey. He was met at the station by a carryall containing two women. He rode about for an hour with them, not stopping anywhere at all, and was driven back to the station, and took the six-twelve back to New York and went direct to his rooms at the Beau Rivage Apartments."

"He saw no one else? Not even a man in black, with a black tie?"

"Absolutely no one."

"And who are the women?"

"One is a Mrs. Elizabeth Cutter, widow, lives in a small house on the outskirts of the village; the other, a Miss Easting, lives a mile away. Both live alone."

"Did you get into either house?"

"I tried to; but couldn't make it. They seemed to be very suspicious of strangers. Miss Easting turned the dog on me."

"Did you notice that either of these women took snuff?"

"One of them looked it. She was sallow, and seemed to have smears of brown in the corners of her mouth."

"Which one was it?"

"Mrs. Cutter."

"Very good. That is all. Thank you for what you've done. Good day."

In a flash Astro had sprung to a messenger call on the wall and pressed down the handle. Then he scribbled a message on a telegraph blank and handed it to Valeska. It read as follows:

Come immediately to the Beau Rivage. Important. P. S.

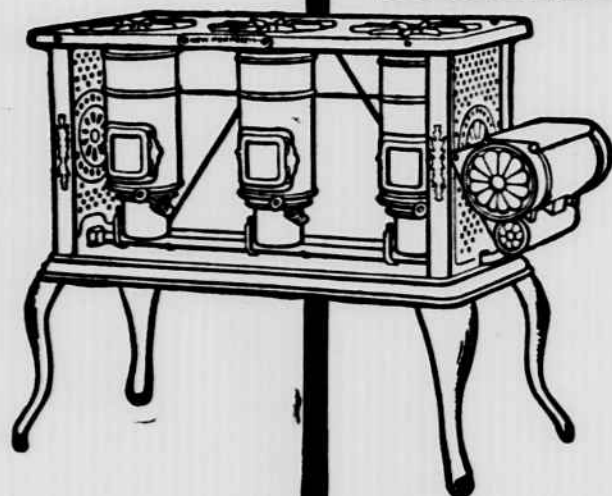
"Give that to the boy when he comes. Where's

Continued on page 18



The Couple Were Fearfully Distracted.

Have You a Summer Stove?

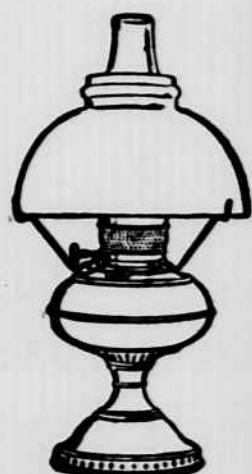


The stifling air of a close kitchen is changed to comfortable coolness by installing a New Perfection Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove to do the family cooking.

No kitchen furnishing is so convenient as this stove. Gives a working heat at once, and maintains it until turned out—that too, without overheating the room. If you examine the

NEW PERFECTION Wick Blue Flame Oil Cook-Stove

you will see why this is so. The heat from the chimney of the "New Perfection" is concentrated under the kettle and not dissipated through the room by radiation. Thus it does the work of the coal range without its discomfort. Ask your dealer about this stove—if not with him, write our nearest agency.



The **Rayo Lamp** is a very handsome piece of housefurnishing and gives a clear, powerful light more agreeable than gas or electricity. Safe everywhere and always. Made of brass finely nickel plated—just the thing for the living-room. If not with your dealer, write our nearest agency.

Standard Oil Company of New York
(Incorporated)

Strong Arms

For 10c. in stamps or coin

I will send, as long as they last, one of my charts showing exercises that will quickly build up shoulders, arms, forearms and hands without any apparatus. They are beautifully illustrated with 20 half-tone cuts. Regular price 25 cents.

PROP. ANTHONY BARKER
33 Barker Bldg., 110 West 42d St., N. Y. City

U. S. METAL POLISH

Indispensable in Every Household 3 oz. Box 10c.
At Your Dealers or Geo. W. Hoffman, Indianapolis, Ind.

All contributions to the Magazine Section

should be addressed to

THE EDITOR
THE ASSOCIATED
SUNDAY MAGAZINES

52 East 19th Street,
New York City

Manuscripts must be accompanied by
stamps if their return is desired.

LABLACHE

FACE POWDER

Perfect as a Rose

smooth and velvety—with the healthful coloring of youth is the complexion of every woman who uses Lablache, the modern beautifier. It prevents blemishes, caused by sun and wind, absorbs perspiration and overcomes that shiny and sallow appearance. It is the acme of purity—an everyday toilet necessity.

Refuse substitutes. They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream, 50c. a box, of druggists or by mail. Send 10c. for sample.

BEN. LEVY CO., French Perfumers
Dept. Y, 125 Kingston St., Boston, Mass.

DEAFNESS

"The Morley Phone"

A miniature Telephone for the Ear—invisible, easily adjusted and entirely comfortable. Makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Over fifty thousand sold, giving instant relief from deafness and head noises. There are but few cases of deafness that cannot be benefited. Write for booklet and testimonials.

THE MORLEY COMPANY
Dept. 6,
Perry Building, 16th and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia

Darken Your Gray Hair

DUBY'S HAIR COLORING HERBS restore gray, streaked or faded hair to its natural color, beauty and softness. Prevents the hair from falling out, promotes its growth, prevents dandruff, and gives the hair a soft, glossy and healthy appearance. IT WILL NOT STAIN THE SCALP. Is not sticky or dirty, contains no sugar of lead, nitrate silver, copperas, or poisons of any kind, but is composed of roots, herbs, barks and flowers. PACKAGE MAKES ONE PINT. It will produce the most luxuriant tresses from dry, coarse and wiry hair, and bring back the color it originally was before it turned gray. Full size package sent by mail, postpaid, for 25 cents. OZARK HERB CO., Block 60, St. Louis, Mo.

CORNS

that SMART and BURN Relieved at once by HAD CORN PADS. 6, 10c.; 18, 25c.; 6 BUNION PLASTERS, 50c.
E. F. Had Co., Yonkers, N. Y.

AGENTS \$300 Every month selling our wonderful SEVEN PIECE KITCHEN SET
Send for sworn statement \$12 daily profit. Experience unnecessary. Outfit free. A. Thomas Mfg. Co., 707 P St., Dayton, O.

WOMEN AND MEN to sell Rosalind Ideal Collar Supporters. No screwing, sewing or pinning. Sells on sight. Mention sizes wanted. 2c. stamp for sample. Big profits. The Rosalind Co., 378 Broadway, N. Y.

DARKEN YOUR Gray Hair

Simply comb it with HAIR DYEING COMB
Comb the grayness out of it, comb back its youthful color, gloss, and lustre. Or if the natural color of your hair displeases you, if it is streaked or faded, comb into it any desired color and give it a beauty it may never have had. Used like an ordinary comb. Guaranteed harmless. Thousands in use. Not sold in stores—write us.

WRITE FOR FREE BOOKLET
"The Book of the Hair," 32 pages of valuable hints on the care and dressing of the hair, also describing fully the uses of the Ideal Comb. Write today.
H. D. COMB CO., Dept. 65, 35 W. 21st St., New York

Calendon Kidnapping Case

Continued from page 10

my revolver? Good! Telephone immediately to Calendon to take the next train for Antwerp, and meet me at the station. I don't want to miss it." He threw himself into a heavy overcoat, slipped the revolver into a pocket, jammed on his hat, and was off before Valeska could question.

She waited in the studio, however, so absorbed had she become in the mystery, so much she feared that, when Astro did return, it would be with some dreadful news.

IT was late in the evening when a telegraph boy arrived with a message for her. Eagerly she tore it open. It read:

"Problem 294: White knight to king's fourth; black rook to queen's bishop's third; white king's rook's pawn to seventh; check black queen's bishop to king's knight; third mate. Please file. A."

Valeska was never more exasperated in her life. Only the solution to a knotty chess problem!

WHEN Calendon alighted on the platform at Antwerp, at eight o'clock that evening, he was met in the shadow of the station by Astro and a burly local constable.

"Plenty of time and a clear field, I think," said Astro, his eyes dancing with the anticipation of peril imminent; "and unless I'm very much mistaken in my understanding, Mr. Calendon, I'll have some pleasant news for you before long."

"I hope to Heaven you will!" said the old man. "I can't stand this much longer. I've sent Mrs. Calendon to the hospital. Her nerves have quite given way under the strain. I only hope that if we get the boy we'll find the dastard that stole him as well!" His look was grim.

"I am afraid you won't get that opportunity, however," said the mystic, drawing out his watch and pausing to inspect it under a gas lamp. "Mr. Stacey was born under an evil planet and in an evil House of the Heavens. At the present moment he is under arrest in the Beau Rivage Apartments. One of his accomplices has just left here for New York, where she will be met by the police. Another will soon be taken. I have been waiting for one more of the gang who is engaged in a shady business hereabouts. We need only him to solve the last shreds of mystery in this affair. I've already seen him in my crystals, dressed in black. It remains to find him on the material plane."

They walked rapidly through the outskirts of the village, past quite a stretch of open country.

Calendon, nervously excited, spoke only once, to say, "There must be some change of affairs, Astro; for so far as I can find the gang didn't speculate to-day in the stocks I tipped off in 'The Era.' I had a circle of my friends attempting to influence the market; but it got away from them altogether. We simply couldn't sell enough to make any effect. The Fountaine Company common stock jumped seven points, when I sold out, and I'm about fifty thousand ahead of the game. If my son is restored to me, I'll have good cause to be happy to-night." He relapsed into silence.

THEY were now approaching a lonely house, back from the road, and in utter darkness. Astro strode up to the front door and knocked. There was no response. The constable unlocked the door with a skeleton key, and all three men entered. A kerosene lamp was found in the kitchen and lighted. Hardly had it been brought into the front room, when Calendon stooped and picked up a child's shirt.

"It is my son's, I'm sure!" he exclaimed in excitement. "Harold! Harold!" he cried aloud, and began a hasty search through the rooms. He was followed by Astro and the constable; but, after a thorough inspection, no living thing was found except a canary, which, awakened by the disturbance, warbled shrilly in the sitting room.

The constable threw open the cellar door,

and, taking the lamp, stumbled down the narrow steps.

In another moment there came a stifled exclamation from below. Calendon dashed down in terror.

SUDDENLY, up stairs, where Astro had momentarily remained, there was heard the sound of footsteps. Then a gruff voice broke out.

"I've got you fellers now! I've tracked you for five days, and now, by hickey! I'll make you pay for it! You'll never snatch another body, curse you!"

There was a shuffling of feet, and Astro's voice rang steadily: "Throw up your hands and drop that gun! You're a pretty character to call names! I think you'll show up well when you're investigated! Constable Jenkins, come up here!" He kicked loudly on the floor.

"By Jove! It's the coroner!" said the constable, appearing in the doorway.

"Is there a body here?" the coroner inquired.

"Yes—why?" Now Calendon appeared, most puzzled and alarmed of all.

"It's all right, Mr. Calendon, we're on their trail now!" said Astro.

Calendon groaned.

"But your boy is safe and unharmed. I have suspected this a long time; but I didn't dare let you hope. Now, coroner, tell your story."

"Why," he began, turning shamefacedly to the constable, "it's this way, Jim. I was comin' along the road last Friday with my outfit an' three of them poorhouse folks's bodies, y'know, an' blamed if the hind axle didn't break short off about a mile up back o' here. I had to walk clean back to Joe Miller's house for a scantlin' to prop up the axle with, an' I was gone about three-quarters of an hour. When I come back I see one o' the coffins was gone—the little one,—a boy it was. An' I see the axle had been sawed half through with a hack saw. Somebody had laid for me just to steal that—"

"And will you please explain," said Astro suavely, "why you were burying these bodies, for which you are paid by the township, at night?"

The coroner's face fell. "Oh, I was too busy day times," he said lamely.

"I think it had best be looked into, constable. I can see where our friend the coroner makes a very pretty little income from the medical students, and does the town out of a few burials occasionally. But we must go on, Mr. Calendon. I had hoped that the boy was here. We must hurry to the other house. It's a mile away. We'll take your rig, coroner, while you attend to the remains in the cellar."

THE three men hurried outdoors, and the constable drove at breakneck pace to Miss Easting's house. Arrived there, they knocked loudly, and, there being no immediate answer, the constable entered.

Calendon followed close behind. "Harold! Harold!" he called loudly.

There was no reply; but a door slammed up stairs, and a pattering of feet was heard. Calendon fairly floundered up and threw open the door. There was still no one in sight; but a tumbled bed showed where some one had lain. A boy's clothes were scattered about the room, a few playthings were on the floor. Astro, who had followed on the father's heels, made directly for a closed door and wrenched it open. There sat a little boy in his red flannel nightgown, caressing a large glass jar of jam. His round chubby cheeks were stained with strawberry.

Then, before his father could reach for him in exultation, the child exclaimed joyfully, "I don't care. I liked it, and I took it, and I eat it, and I don't care! I don't!"

And after the frightful strain that had been on the three men who gazed down at the boy, they all broke into a hearty laugh.

It was Harold Calendon, and he was perfectly happy.

Marvels of the Human Body

Continued from page 6

strength. It has been estimated that if the hairs of a blond could be plaited into a rope, they would support a weight of eighty tons.

The hair on the head grows at the rate of about one-fiftieth of an inch each day, or about seven inches a year. An eyelash grows much faster, say about one-twentieth of an inch each day, until it reaches a length of four-tenths of an inch, when it falls out. The life of an eyelash is about one hundred and twenty days.

It just takes about the same length of time, from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and forty days, for the fingernails to be entirely renewed. The toenails grow more slowly, requiring from six months to a year for their renewal.

A Baby's Growth

THE average length of a baby fifteen days old is nineteen and one-half inches. During the next fifteen days the baby grows an inch and a half. By the end of its first year of life it has grown to be twenty-eight and one-quarter inches long. If the child went on growing at this rate, by the end of its third year of life it would have attained the height of the average adult man, five feet nine inches. By the end of his fifth year he would be ten feet seven inches tall, and by the time he reached his tenth birthday he would be a

veritable Colossus, with a height of sixty-eight feet three inches. After the first year, however, the rate of growth gradually decreases. During the second year the average growth of the body is three and one-half inches; during the third year it is only three inches; during the fourth year it is two and a half inches; and for the next ten years it is about one and a half inches a year.

As might be expected, there is a similar alteration in the rate of weight increase. During the first twenty-two weeks of life, the infant doubles its weight. If a child of average weight continued to grow at this rate, long before his fourth birthday he would weigh two tons.

The human eye can discern an object so minute as one-six-hundred-and-twenty-fifth of an inch in diameter. An object of this size makes on the retina, or sensitive plate of the eye, an image one twelve-thousand-five-hundredth of an inch in diameter. With the help of the microscope the eye can discern an object one-four-hundred-thousandth of an inch in size.

Nerve messages travel at the rate of one hundred and ten feet a second.

The body contains over two thousand miles of tubing.

The body secretes each day about four gallons, or thirty pounds, of digestive fluids.